



# **High School Test in Writing**

***Released Items  
Spring 2000***

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## Scoring Guide for the High School Test in Writing

Readers use these rubrics (holistic scorepoint descriptions) as guides  
when they score your writing.

### Session 1

- 4 The written response demonstrates the ability to reflect critically on one's own writing. Ideas are supported by specific examples or details from the portfolio pieces. Organization and form enhance the central ideas and move the reader through the text. The voice and tone are authentic and compelling. There may be minor surface feature errors.
- 3 The written response demonstrates the ability to reflect on one's own writing. Ideas are somewhat supported by examples or details from the portfolio pieces. Organization and form are appropriate and present the ideas coherently. The voice and tone support the ideas conveyed. Surface feature errors may be noticeable.
- 2 The written response demonstrates some ability to reflect on one's own writing. Ideas are presented as generalizations about writing or simple summaries of portfolio pieces. The voice and tone may be inappropriate or uneven. Limited control of surface features may make the writing awkward to read.
- 1 The written response demonstrates the attempt to reflect on one's own writing. Ideas are supported by few, if any, details and examples. There is little discernible shape or direction. There is little control over voice and tone. Limited control of surface features may make the writing difficult to read.

### Session 2

- 4 The writing is engaging, original, clear, and focused. Ideas and content are richly developed and supported by details and examples where appropriate. Control of organization and transitions move the reader easily through the text. The voice and tone are authentic and compelling. Control of language and skillful use of writing conventions contribute to the effect of the presentation.
- 3 The writing is generally clear, focused, and well-developed. Examples and details support ideas and content where appropriate. The presentation is generally coherent, and its organizational structure is functional. The voice, tone, diction, and sentence structure support meaning. Use of writing conventions is not distracting.
- 2 The writing has some focus and support. Ideas and content may be developed with limited details and examples. The presentation shows some evidence of structure, but it may be artificial or only partially successful. The tone may be inappropriate or the voice uneven. Sentence structure and diction are generally correct but rudimentary. Limited control of writing conventions may interfere with meaning some of the time.
- 1 The writing has little focus and development. Ideas and content are supported by few, if any, details and examples. There is little discernible shape or direction. The writing demonstrates no control over voice and tone. Faulty sentence structure and limited vocabulary interfere with understanding. Limited control of writing conventions (such as spelling, grammar/usage, capitalization, punctuation, and/or indentation) makes the writing difficult to read.

#### Condition codes for unratable papers—Sessions 1 and 2

A off task

B illegible

C written in a language other than English

D blank/refused to respond

# SESSION 1

## REPORTING AND REFLECTING

### DIRECTIONS:

You will have 35 minutes in which to write a response to the writing topic below and to transfer your response to your ANSWER BOOKLET. You may use the following page for notes, freewriting, outlining, or clustering, but any writing you want scored for Session 1 must start on page 3 in the ANSWER BOOKLET. Nothing in this test booklet will be scored.

You have received a separate sheet called the Scoring Guide for the High School Test in Writing. You may want to review the scorepoint descriptions for Session 1 prior to writing your response.

You may use a dictionary, thesaurus, spelling book, and/or grammar book at any time. Wristwatch alarms may NOT be used during the test.

### WRITING TOPIC:

Look over the two portfolio pieces of writing that you have in front of you.

**Explore the strengths and/or weaknesses of your two pieces of writing. You must use specific details from your writing to clearly illustrate and support the points you make.**

Your audience will be interested adult readers who **DO NOT** have your two portfolio pieces of writing.

## 1a Student Response 1

In my first writing, sexism in the school, I state that there are many sex offenders and I hear a lot of remarks anywhere that I turn. The point in this paper was to persuade others who haven't already noticed the sex battles to notice them and agree with me. I tried to prove that being a sexist will prove nothing of a person except ignorance. In my example, I show that males and females fight and argue about ridiculous subjects such as "who could eat more" or "who is stronger." Then I see a girl supporter fight back by saying "Any thing a man can do, a woman can do better." And still what does being a sexist prove? Nothing. Although, I think it is good to be proud of your sex and defend it but offending the other will probably start a riot.

My second piece of writing is about Parkinson's disease. I've listed some people that have it, like Muhammad Ali and Janet Reno. Then I described the symptoms. However, the point in this paper was to teach other students about Parkinson's and describe the symptoms. I also had tell about the history and/or if there was a cure. I described the symptoms as the movements are decreased, the arms, legs, or head, shake constantly. And also when asleep, the symptoms don't appear. When I wrote about the history of Parkinson's, I found ~~it~~ out that it was named after James Parkinson's and that it is also known as parkinsonism or shaky palsy. Then finally I wrote about the cure and found

out that it was treated with drugs but had  
strange side effects. But now there are better  
drugs with fewer side effects. Although neuro surgery  
is the best control for parkinson's disease.  
Hopefully

**Score Point: 1**

Though many text references from both writing samples are presented, none of the points is identified as a strength or weakness. Repeated declarations of the writer's intent (I state; I've listed; I write about) emphasize that the focus is off task, retelling rather than reflecting.

## 1b Student Response 2

What I really like about my two pieces of writing is the way I ask questions. When I asked a question in my paper it was normally followed by a reasonable answer or simply why I was writing my paper.

Another strength about my paper is the way I set it up. Normally I follow my teacher's directions and the paper comes out the way I like it.

A weakness in my two papers is the lack of examples. I think I don't give enough examples. I also think that I should really extend some of the examples in my paper. I should show how the examples really work in my paper.

One more weakness would be writing these paragraphs and these paragraphs.

**Score Point: 1**

The attempt at critical reflection remains too vague for the reader to understand either the critical points (I really like ... the way I ask questions) or the attempts to support points (it was normally followed by a reasonable answer).

## 1c Student Response 3

In the story I wrote named "The Decision" I thought it was very well written and worded. I believe it had some very good background backing up my topics.

Some of the strengths to this story is the contents and it being well written. I believe that it being about me I knew what to say and it came out very well in writing.

Some of the weaknesses were the length of the paragraphs and overall the length of the story. I believe I could have added some more detail to the story that way it would have been longer.

So In Conclusion I would say I did a very good job overall, but it still could use a little work done to it.

**Score Point: 1**

This response offers only vague or surface points of criticism regarding one writing sample. Attempts at analysis only underscore the writer's lack of understanding of the critical task (it being about me I knew what to say; some more detail ... that way it would have been longer).

**1d** Student Response 4

I give alot of Detail about my topic. I describe the people I am talking about. I gave more than one Fact. I gave numbers. I did not jump around. My only weakness is my sentences are short and not very descriptive ~~to the~~ Some times I tend to ramble on. I also tend to Capitalize words that should not be capitalized I also spell word wrong. I don't have a closing sentence.

**Score Point: 2**

This minimal response mixes assertions regarding surface features of the writing (tend to capitalize words) with more important points of criticism (did not jump around; sometimes I tend to ramble on). Though lacking in support and detail, these generalizations about the writing are sufficient to achieve a low 2.



## 1e Student Response 5

"Our perfect world" is a very optimistic poem about what an imperable world would be like. It discusses the idea of a planet far away where there is no hurt. But, although, "Pain is non-existent, And anguish is not heard" the world is bland and lonely. "There's no such thing as feelings, Only rules to abide" exaggerates that although no one is hurt, no ~~one~~ <sup>one</sup> is surprised, or in love, or happy. These perfect people don't live, they only circulate air. There is an exception. "There's only one small boy that knows, not pure in any sense. He feels, he hurts, he loves, he cries, He feels that he is less." This idea of some one who is imperfect helps us to see how we, as humans, would feel in their "perfect world". It helps the reader to put himself in the little boy's situation and feel his pain. The stanza, "He stands outside upon the grass, which is perfect as all else. He rips and tears, and burns that grass, So it knows just how he felt" ~~It~~ helps us see how bitter and lonely this boy was. His rage had ruined perfection, but in his eyes the grass was better now. Now, something on his planet understood his pain and he didn't feel quite so alone. In the end, the boy and the writer connect eyes and each boy sees what he wants more than anything. The writer wants a world pleasing to the eye and without pain. The boy wants a world who understands him and feels like he does. The beginning and end paragraphs play off of each other. The stanza, "Somewhere in this universe, Beyond the farthest star, revolves a perfect world, not blemished with one scar," begins the poem, and the stanza, "He stares into the universe, beyond the farthest star, and sees his

perfect world, which is where we are," ends the poem. The similarities help make a point that perhaps the writer is looking in the wrong place. Perhaps, our world is a great one and we should appreciate it.

I mainly picked this piece because of its emotion, which I have explained. It leaves you with pity for the boy, and pride in the earth. I also liked this poem because there was a story inside of it. It wasn't just a bunch of adjectives, it had some strong verbs in it. I'm also a very optimistic person, and I really felt the poem expressed a lot of my opinions throughout the poem, which I have already written on the page prior to this. I write this in hope's of a better tomorrow, but a happy today.

**Score Point: 2**

Though this response analyzes the message of one piece of writing at some length, for the most part it fails to attend to the task of criticizing strengths and weaknesses of the *writing*. A few critical points within the poem's analysis (it helps the reader to put himself in their "perfect world"; the beginning and end paragraphs play off each other), as well as the concluding points of analysis, attend to the task sufficiently to achieve a score point of 2.

## 1f Student Response 6

My paper was entitled "The Jazz Era". It talked about how the 1920's was called "The Jazz Era" it explored some of the reasons for why it was called that. It covered a very interesting and valid subject it gave at least three reasons why it was called the Jazz Era. The paper also talked about the recreational difference between now and the 1920's. It explained how Jazz effected us now and then and why it effected us. It explained mobsters and their effect on life in the 20's (This topic had more to do with the 20's rather than why it was called the 20's so I feel that in some ways this paper went off to a different topic it started to make the thesis less about the Jazz Era and more about the 20's. It ~~was~~ wrapped up quite nicely by restating the thesis and explaining more about Jazz in general. This major strength of this paper was the closing. It helped tie in the writing in the paper towards jazz.

The second paper that I chose was a story written in my U.S. History class.

It was meant to be taking place during the Civil War. It used dialogue that people might have used back in those days. It also used specific dates (a battle). I used the Battle of Vicksburg. I recreated the setting to make the reader interested in what he/she was planning on reading. It gave specifics in dates and deaths of people, it was very informative.

I used the point of view of a Soldier, a Commander for the North or "the great high and mighty Union", as I used in my text, ~~the~~ ~~the~~

The paper talked about the great military ~~leaders~~ leaders that each side had and what they did, and even how they acted and/or reacted to the events going on. ¶

In the closing it was how the Battle had ended for the character, a victory and a return to his friends and family. ¶

Some weaknesses might be that the paper could use a few more facts toward the war and/or the battle of Vicksburg. Or how it was a turning point in the War against the Confederate army.

**Score Point: 2**

Although this strong 2 response makes many statements and general text references, most are not linked to the strengths or weaknesses of the writing. Without critical reflection or direction, the text references appear to have no point beyond that of mere summary or retelling (the paper talked about...).

## 1g Student Response 7

My two pieces of writing have to do with a career search. One is a resume, and one is a more detailed background about Law Enforcement. A strong point about them is that I put a paragraph about myself in it, what my hopes of doing after High School were. I went into too much detail on them, making it long and seem like it was endless. In the paragraph about challenging elements, I didn't list, I went kind of short, but policemen have probably one of the most challenging jobs. I used specific facts and statistics showing exactly what an officer gets paid, and how many there are and how many get hired, per year. In the longer paper, the Introduction was good as was the conclusion. I showed good details about what an officer does and doesn't do in a regular day's work. On my resume, I showed what kind of athletic achievements I had, so to look active and to look like I could handle work. Good references was a key also.

**Score Point: 2**

This response highlights some critical points of the two writing samples and attempts to support these points with general text references. However, weak organization causes the reader to be confused as to which writing piece is being examined and which points illustrate which strengths or weaknesses.

## 1h Student Response 8

For my first piece of writing I choose a grouping of related poems. I believe I have many strengths in this piece because of the descriptive language used. An example of descriptive language in my piece is the line "They don't look in her lost, hopeless, searching eyes." But, description isn't the only strength represented in my piece. I believe another strength is the conveyance of emotion and meaning. My piece may be grammatically and punctually incorrect but I believe they are good if I get my feelings and points across to my readers. My weaknesses are my punctuation and grammar. When I write poetry I tend to just let it flow and stop it on the paper. Some times the pieces I write are good but, some times they stink. I want to strive to write more structured so that my feelings and points always come across.

My second piece is an element Report for science class. I had to choose an element and write an informative essay on it to read to the class. I believe my strengths in this piece are my organization of information. My other strengths are that I ~~and~~ ordered everything in a concise manner without overloading the readers with too much information at once. My weaknesses are that I believe it is too factual. I wish I would have made the piece more interesting for my readers.

**Score Point: 2**

This high 2 response opens with a specific example to support the point of “descriptive language.” The level of reflection is not sustained, however, and the response becomes a mere list of unsupported assertions (another strength is the conveyance of emotion and meaning) and generalizations about writing (sometimes the pieces I write are good but sometimes they stink).

## 1i Student Response 9

This is about what I liked about my two papers. One is not named and the other is called Bio-Riddle. In the following paragraphs I will explain what I like about each paper and give examples of what I like.

The first paper that I will write about is the one without a name. The first thing that I like about this paper is ~~the first sentence~~ how I began my introduction paragraph. For example it went like this: A new school, new friends, a new life all of this boils down to one thing moving. I like it because it says what I wanted it to say very clearly.

A second thing which I like about this paper was using some old phrase that put a little humor in this piece. An example is: Unfortunately a ten-speed doesn't stop on a dime, so I tried to stop which didn't work. I like the phrase stop on a dime because it is an old one most people have heard and because you can picture it in your mind.

A third thing I liked about this paper was how I described certain details so you picture what I meant. An example is Tim then held me in his arms and said in a shaky voice are you okay? I like this because it ~~said~~ was just as I remembered it.

In my other paper the Bio-Riddle. I liked how I gave important details from Amala.



Easthart's life. For example I quit school, so I could become a nurse's aid in Toronto at Spadina Military Hospital. This is an important detail because it shows how caring she was.

I also liked how I put in some funny things of her life. Such as

**Score Point: 3**

Though outwardly attending to all aspects of the task—making analytic points, offering specific support and then reflecting upon the issues—vague points (I like how I began my introduction) and equally vague attempts at explanation (says what I wanted to say very clearly) hold this response to a low 3.

## 1j Student Response 10

The story "Patience," I wrote about my friend, has some weaknesses as well as strengths. I really didn't set this story up as well as I could have. I could have also described the setting a little better. For example; I ~~should~~ should have continued my second line by describing the first line more by showing how Bob is patient and I need more examples to support my theme. Instead of putting, "Every time we hang out, we laugh and have fun," I could put something like, "Bob and I like to build things, even if I am the only one doing anything, this would have gave an example of how Bob is patient because he sits around while I do things. I could also put, "When Bob and I go on hunting, I am usually the first one out of the tree, ~~but~~ Bob is usually the last, even if there isn't any deer around. For that's patience," which would show the patience at which Bob has.

The story "Patience," also has some strengths in it. Strengths such as, "... Do you think you can handle it?" Bob replied sarcastically, "I don't know!" Then I told him, "No pain, no gain," which actually gives the reader an image of the story and shows you what's going on instead of just telling you what's going on. I also put things like "... Mr. La Duke, I think I seriously ~~hurt~~ hurt my arm," which describes the picture and gives the reader a better image by using actual words at which were said.

As you can see, I have some good as well as bad parts and points included in this story.

## Score Point: 3

Despite identifying many weaknesses and strengths and using many examples, the selected examples and/or analysis only somewhat support the intended criticism (then I told him, "No pain, no gain," which actually gives the reader an image of the story). Clearer points of criticism or more appropriate text examples would be necessary for a higher score point.

## 1k Student Response 11

All student written pieces that I have  
just read are in need of some cleanup work. No  
one person can produce a perfect paper the  
first time around. It takes many re-readings  
and looks in the dictionary or thesaurus before  
a person's work is completely the way they want  
it; and I'm no' exception to this rule.

I chose two of better works for this test  
and even going over them again, just now, I found  
a misspelled word. I also found many things I  
needed to improve on and many things I liked.

In my AIDS article, overview, I compared  
it to views on tattooing AIDS victims with  
a red dot to that of the Scarlet Letter. This comparison  
was mentioned in the article. It wrote and I pointed  
out that if he would have done his research, he would have  
found that Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote the book to  
make fun of the puritan society.

In my overview I asked it not to make  
"the word murderer synonymous with the AIDS victim."  
I thought that this phrase would deliver some  
impact on the readers and what they think when  
they read my article.

Also, finding the flaws in my paper  
made me realize that not everyone is perfect the first  
time they try doing something.

In the first paragraph of this paper I

mention that I don't know how it could have survived this long in the world without getting beat up or mugged. I say this because of his wildly outlandish views though I didn't make that very clear.

My second piece 'Satan in Salem' is written in first person, which I think is the hardest to do so I'm slightly proud of this work, and it uses some good descriptive phrases.

'I saw the axes, I held over them by the fear in their eyes' is one of my favorite sentences.

The wolf in the story is the main character and though he is evil he brings a certain wildness to the story.

I could have been more descriptive than I already was during the scenes where I, as the wolf, am killing and eating the chicken.

I also could have drawn out these paragraphs longer, and that would increase the triviality of it.

The last paragraph offers a solid conclusion and reference to the Witch Trials that were later held in Salem.

My two pieces, though not perfect are the result of a high school student's careful planning and though not perfect I think I did pretty good job.

### Score Point: 3

This response reflects upon two samples of writing using specific text references for support. Because the points of criticism are frequently obscure (I asked G not to make "the word murderer synonymous with the AIDS victim") and the analysis vague (the wolf ... brings a certain wildness to the story), the response is held to a 3.

## 11 Student Response 12

The two pieces I wrote were good pieces. The first one was about a lab we did in an Advanced Biology class entitled "The Fertilizer That Helps Beans Grow". The paper was short and not one of my best ever. The strong points of my paper were it was very informative on how the lab turned out. It was done on a computer so it was very easy to read and neat. I also did well on my spelling and punctuation. The weaknesses of this first paper were I wrote all the numbers in numerical form. For example 2 should be two,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  should be three and one-half, etc. It was very short and did not give a lot of information about the procedure or anything like that.

The second piece I wrote entitled "My First Kill" was one of my best I've ever written. It was a personal narrative about paintballing. This was written for my eleventh grade writing class. Its strengths include good detail, good grammar and punctuation, and also good imagery. An example of good detail in my paper is when I wrote "six yards dead ahead was a smaller but still sufficient tire bunker. In running to it I noticed several things. Chris immediately took my <sup>former</sup> position, while one of our guys was locked onto a couple of enemies sneaking near side." An example of good grammar is when I wrote "Tired and hot, Chris and I were glad to have a ten minute break to cool off. It had warmed up to a humid 95 degrees. And finally good imagery in my paper includes "I raised my barrel, staring down it with my goggles half fogged and the strange combination of body odor and stale CO<sub>2</sub> filled the air." The weaknesses of my paper include using numerals again, and was pretty drawn out (long).

In conclusion these papers were pretty good. They had their own strong and weak points. These pieces were easily used for this test and served their purposes.

**Score Point: 3**

This strong 3 response offers many specific points of criticism. However, the reflection upon the first writing sample is mainly a list of assertions (short; very easy to read) with only an occasional general text reference for support (more informative on how the lab turned out). Though specific examples support critical points regarding the "paintballing" paper, no critical reflection explains their significance.

## 1m Student Response 13

My first piece of writing is about an element called Ytterbium. I made this story told by Ytterbium, and he told all about himself. Some strengths about my piece are that I have put a lot of information in it. Also I made it interesting by having my element be able to talk to the readers. Some of the information is stuff that others didn't know about, but now they do. I also thought I used some good words like "face-centered cubic crystal" and "body-centered form". Some weaknesses in my piece were that it was really short, and I didn't explain myself very well. I also believe that my Introduction and Conclusion could of been more detailed and made longer than two sentences. I believe it was a good piece if I edited it a little bit more.

My second piece of writing is a lot different than my first. It is about me and how I have sinned. I had to find a quote from someone and write about it. Strengths in this piece are that I went into some good description about how I ~~stole~~ stole a candy bar and felt so guilty I put the money for it on the counter. Also I think this piece will help others not steal, because of some of my experiences. Another good thing is that I went

in order of the events. Some things I need to work on are making my introductions and conclusions more detailed and have a thesis and my main points in them. Another thing is that my sentences can be shortened up a little bit, for example, in the fourth paragraph where it states, "When he left, the owner said she wouldn't call my mom if I promised never to it again. All I had to say was that ~~she~~ she threatened to call my mom if I did it again. This was the first story I wrote this year so it was a little poor, but I ~~thought~~ thought it was a good story."

**Score Point: 3**

This high 3 response addresses the strengths and weaknesses of each writing sample. However, most points remain unsupported or are only somewhat supported by general text references (good description about how I stole a candy bar). When specific examples are cited (good words like "face-centered cubic crystal"), their significance is not critically examined.

1n Student Response 14

## "An Event That Influenced My Life"

### 1) Strengths -

~~Some strengths of this paper~~

One strength of this paper is the introductory paragraph. It shows humor, which I believe helps hook the reader. Like, when I say, "I'm not sure it changed or influenced my life, but I can always lie about it and say it did." This should make the reader want to go on, wondering about what I might write.

Another strength is in the opening paragraph when I ask questions of the reader. Like, "What was I going to do?" and, "Where was I going to go." I believe, that this also makes the reader want to continue on.

Some other strengths are my use of dialogue and similes. These two things help to bring more into the story.

### 2) Weaknesses -

One weakness is ~~is~~ that a couple of my paragraphs don't tie together as well as they possibly <sup>can</sup> ~~could~~. I think ~~if~~ I am missing a period of time between the two, that makes it sound awkward.

Another weakness is my conclusion. It needs more to it. It just doesn't completely tie up and bring together the whole paper.

## "My Contemporary American Hero"

### 1) Strengths -

I believe the introductory paragraph is a strength!



What I have done in it, is looked up the meaning of the word "hero." What I discovered, was that all of the definitions used the word "man." This made my introduction humorous and ~~an~~ ironic because I was <sup>writing</sup> ~~fighting~~ upon my mother. So, I believe my introduction helped to hook ~~my~~ the reader by the use of humor.

Another strength is when I describe my mother in the paragraph about

**Score Point: 4**

This response begins and ends with clear points supported by specific text references and clarifying critical reflection. Though some unsubstantiated assertions (other strengths are my use of dialogue and similes) are linked to general reflections on writing (help to bring more into the story), sufficient specific details support this analysis for a low 4.

## 10 Student Response 15

One sample of my writing, which I have decided to submit, is a short story entitled "A Lost Youth." After analyzing my paper, I have noticed many strengths and weaknesses. I feel that my strengths fall into the categories of vocabulary and descriptive writing, while my weakness seems to be in the area of the closing.

Vocabulary is an important part of any story, and I felt that I used adequate vocabulary throughout my entire story. One example of the vocabulary I used is stated in the following sentence, "Slowly and feebly the old man began to make his way towards the gray rock down by the lake shore." I felt that the word feebly, best fit the sentence dealing with the old man. Another example of the vocabulary is when I used the sentence, "What a fool, what an obtuse man I am." I decided to use the word obtuse to better describe the man. The other strengths of my story fell into the area of description. To me, the description I used really enhanced the quality of my story. I used such descriptive sentences as, "The path was nearly covered with new lush vegetation, and parts we covered with no existing evidence of the former path twisted on the dense forest floor," and "On his right was a beautiful assortment of wild ~~flowers~~ flowers, with all the colors of the spectrum." Another example of the descriptive sentences is, "The sunlight seemed to dance on its crystal clear, motionless waters." Those are just a few examples of my stories strengths.

The weakness of my story comes towards the end. To me, I feel that I cannot give you a specific example of the weakness.

written because it isn't what is written, but what isn't written. I feel that I could have put in a few other ideas to bring out the full affect of my story. Overall I like my ending, but feel a few ~~additions~~ additions would enhance the quality.

My second piece of writing also has its own strengths and weaknesses. The strengths of my history paper are my use of facts throughout the paper. My weakness shows up in my thesis statement, which really makes it a major weakness.

My weakness is in the thesis statement that states, "Now nearly five centuries later, Native Americans are striving to preserve a unique and diverse way of life." I had two thoughts going at the time, but didn't separate them on paper. If I would have eliminated "Now nearly five centuries later," the statement would have been alright.

My strengths come in such sentences as, "In 1953, after much debate, Congress decided to work toward the withdrawal of federal support and responsibility for Native Americans affairs."

**Score Point: 4**

This response focuses on the analytic task from the start (my strengths fall into the categories of vocabulary and descriptive writing while my weakness seems to be in the area of the closing). Points of criticism (good vocabulary) are supported by appropriate specific text (slowly and feebly the old man) and explained (the word feebly best fit the sentence dealing with the old man). A strong organizational strategy enhances the ideas and moves the reader through each point of critical reflection.

## 1p Student Response 16

Being asked to critique your own work can sometimes be an uncomfortable situation. You don't want to say too many good things about your writing or you'll think that others are thinking you're conceited. Being too critical of oneself can also lower self-esteem, so I'll try to balance it out. Good news first.

I had a few positive things to say about my writing, "My vocabulary ~~and~~ is adequate enough to paint what I want you to <sup>see</sup> ~~see~~. Example: ~~Do~~ In my paper entitled, ~~the~~ "The American Dream," I interviewed a young 12-year-old boy and asked him what his dream was. I thought that I did a fair job in letting you see what he dreamed and how he dreamed it. "He wants to lead the best team in the NHL to the Stanley Cup Finals, and point that glistening trophy above his head in a display of victory, while the nation watches and cheers."

I'm now informed that I'm running out of time. I apologize that I know have to move to critique myself and I will be less specific.

There is sometimes a lack of flow in my papers. I will talk in my paper on the female characters <sup>personalities</sup> in the novel, *Of Mice and Men*, here are examples: in the first paragraph, I talk about Curley's trashy wife and how she seems so bad, but then jump to how Aunt Clara is so nice, and in paragraph 2 go back into how Curley's wife is a strange character.

~~On the other hand~~ I also had a tendency to be quite repetitive. I would use words like but, also, and then much too frequently. I said how Cusky's wife didn't have a name a few more times than necessary.

Occasionally I would forget that the person reading that paper might not have read the book. I would begin talking about characters as if they knew who they were. Example: I went into saying how Cusky's wife was just like Lennie without saying who Lennie was.

Time constraints do not allow me to tear my own writing apart ~~up~~ much longer, sadly enough, so just remember that this session may be a bit humbling for some when you're grading this.

Score Point: 4

## 1q Student Response 17

I am writing on two papers which I have written in both my health and English classes. Throughout this essay I will be exploring the strengths and weaknesses of the papers. In my mind, the paper titled "Health During and After Pregnancy," is my strongest writing piece. Below I will describe, compare, and contrast my two essays.

The paper written for Health, on pregnancy most appeals to me because in the opening sentence I get the author's attention by describing the first stage of conception from a mother's (to her young child) point-of-view. This is especially appealing to the reader because instead of a "same old" boring opening sentence such as, "This paper is going to be on Pregnancy," I twisted that all around and came up with the opening sentence, "Once you were<sup>in</sup> a small, dark place inside your mother's body, floating in a bubble of warm water." As for the paper's weaknesses, it's hard for me to say, but one that stands out to me is how I went from one point-of-view to another without doing any kind of good switch into the next subject.

For example: I went from telling a story to a young child about conception, into telling the reader what I was going to include in my report. From that point on out, I believe my paper is a very well-written one.

The essay on "Themes/Comparisons" that I wrote for my English class was not as well-written, but I also had less time to work on it. The opening sentence doesn't grab the readers attention, and I don't use a quote or fact which may also get their attention.

"These three works all tell of internal struggles that people in the stories went through," is my opening sentence in my English essay. To me, that is a very boring sentence and does nothing at all to interest the reader in my work. On the other hand however, I do use very "grown-up" language throughout the essay, which allows readers to be more interested in what is being said, (besides the fact they make you sound smarter). Another aspect I like about my English essay is that I compare and relate the stories to the themes. For example: I tell of how a story called "The Slump" pertains to self-realization because of the fact that the baseball player finally realized that

the reason for his poor baseball skills was the fact that he was "losing his eyesight." Another small, but important, error in this piece of writing is spelling. Because this essay was not typed it was not possible to spellcheck.

Overall, I believe I have two very strong pieces of writing, even though one piece is better than the other. The style of my writing is very well done, and the way I put words together allows the writing to be more appealing. But, once again, I must say that my health essay was my stronger piece.

**Score Point: 4**



## 1r Student Response 18

~~In response while evaluating my own two writing samples, the first a~~  
~~D~~

The two writing samples I choose were from advanced classes. The first was a ~~three~~ research paper entitled, "Places that show the Evils of War" for college English. The second was a report <sup>called the 1987</sup> ~~called~~ A DBQ or a document-based-question for Advance Placement History. In the second, you are given a question and about 10 documents. You then form an opinion based on the documents and have 45 minutes to write a report proving your point of view. After looking over them critically, I have notice several things about my writing: the thesis is clear, paragraphs are logically ordered, and the conclusions <sup>do</sup> ~~are~~ a nice job of wrapping the whole paper together. ~~When comparing the two samples I've noticed that the "Places that show the Evils of War" uses better transition words and is just worded better than the DBQ.~~

The thesis of "The Places That Show the Evils of War" begins with the quote, "A hospital alone shows what war is." This grabs the reader's attention and ~~lets~~ helps them wonder what I'm going to say about this quote. In a clear precise sentence that follows I object to this quote, claiming, "It is unfair to restrict as broad a subject as war to one area." It is then made obvious to the reader that I will go on to tell ~~what~~ <sup>where</sup> what other areas war can be found in. Later, in my introduction paragraph, I make it even more precise for my audience by telling them about the specific places the effects of war are shown in: the battlefield, mental institutions, households of soldiers, cities in which the battles are taking place, and businesses abroad. In my DBQ, the first sentence grabs the reader's attention by giving them background information on the American Civil War, then <sup>by</sup> telling them that it was caused by the American Constitution, I ~~go onto~~ <sup>open</sup> tell the readers what the rest of the essay is going to be

about, "From the time South Carolina succeeded from the union till the cannons rested at ~~Richmond~~, when the North captured Richmond, the American civil war was caused by conflicts involving the country's Constitution." The thesis is crystal clear. I then let ~~the~~ reader know how I am going to prove this by giving examples of the problems the Constitution caused: "both sides feared they would lose power in the House of Representatives." <sup>Since I</sup> ~~by clearly~~ stating my thesis and specifically giving examples of what my paper will say, my introductory paragraph is an example of good writing.

After I have listed the ~~order in~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~the~~ examples in my introductory paragraph, I go on to explain them in the same order. For example, in my College English paper I list, "the battlefield, mental institutions, households of soldiers, cities in which the battles took place, and businesses abroad." So my first paragraph is about the battlefield, second- the mental institutions, and so on. ~~This is~~ In my DBQ, the first example I list is the fear of being outvoted in the House of Representatives. ~~My~~ In the following paragraph, I explain how the Missouri Compromise gave more seats to the north and the south began to worry. This keeps the whole paper unified and gives the readers no surprises on what they will hear next.

When the ~~whole~~ <sup>body</sup> of my essays are finished, I used the conclusions to restate the main ideas of the body. Then I add a little punch, that gets the readers to really consider my opinion. In my DBQ, I end with, "the Constitution ultimately contributed to the fall of the union it worked so hard to create." My ~~Research paper is not as~~ I end my research paper with, "ironically the effects of this "war to end all wars" could most clearly be seen less than 30 years later, when World War II broke out in the same countries. Now this does add a little punch and strengthens my statement that war isn't just seen in a hospital. One criticism, however, is that I introduced a renez

subject -- Do WWI cause WWII? in my conclusion. However, I feel the strength of this statement outdoes that fact that it may introduce a new subject.

By having a strong, clear thesis, logically ordered paragraphs, and a punch-sum it all up conclusion, I feel my writing is strong. Two examples which prove this are "The Places that Show the Evils of War" and my 1987 DBQ.

**Score Point: 4**

1s Student Response 19

I feel that my two pieces of writing are both excellent pieces. They are both some of the best I have ever done. They are not perfect, however. In this essay I will discuss some of the strengths and weaknesses of these two pieces of writing.

I will begin with my persuasive essay "Conviction for Kevorkian ?????". In this essay my viewpoint was that Jack Kevorkian should not be convicted of first degree murder. One strength of this piece was that it was very informative. I used many facts and statistics, such as the number of suicides Kevorkian has attended, to prove my point. Another strength of this piece was that it was very well organized. It had a clear introduction, which stated my point, body, which proved my point, and conclusion, which reviewed what I had just said. This made the essay easy to read and understand.

This piece of writing also had some weaknesses. One ~~weakness~~ was that I used a few vague and unclear phrases. For example, I used the phrase, "ways that have been deemed unacceptable by the public". I never

clarified what those "ways" could be. That made it more difficult for the reader to understand my ideas. Another weakness of this piece was that I used too many technical terms. I talked a lot about criminology, and I used criminological terms such as "justification", "excuse", and "necessity". A person reading this essay who was not familiar with these terms in a criminological sense might not know what they mean. This also interfered with the understanding of the essay.

I will now discuss my narrative essay "Life Lessons". This essay is about the death of my father. One strength of this piece of work is that it is about a personal experience. Because of this, I was able to use many details, and describe thoughts and feelings. For example, I described exactly what my mother said when she told me my father had died, and I described exactly how I felt and acted. This made the story very vivid and real.

One weakness of this essay is that it is slightly repetitive. For example, I say, "...I was very young when this occurred..."

and later on in the essay say, "I was very young when my father passed away". This repetition makes an otherwise interesting piece of writing slightly boring. One other weakness of this essay is that my conclusion is too short. The last paragraph is only three sentences long. The whole piece of writing is very involved and emotional, and such a short conclusion makes it end too abruptly.

Both of my pieces of writing have strengths and weaknesses. Overall, however, I feel they are both very good. They are two very different types of writing, but they both reflect my own style as a writer.

Score Point: 4

# SESSION 2

## COMPOSING AND COMMUNICATING MEANING: EXTENDED WRITING TASK

### DIRECTIONS:

You will have 85 minutes in which to write a response to the extended writing topic below and to transfer your response to your ANSWER BOOKLET. Organize your time in the manner that works best for you. Do not feel you need to fill every page of the ANSWER BOOKLET.

You may use pages 8 through 13 in this booklet for notes, freewriting, outlining, clustering, or writing your rough draft, but any writing you want scored for Session 2 must start on page 9 of your ANSWER BOOKLET. Nothing in this test booklet will be scored.

You may want to review the scorepoint descriptions for Session 2 of the Scoring Guide for the High School Test in Writing prior to writing your response. The final copy of this paper will be scored as polished writing, so you should give careful thought to revision (rethinking ideas) and polishing (editing and proofreading).

You may use a dictionary, thesaurus, spelling book, and/or grammar book at any time. Wristwatch alarms may NOT be used during the test.

### EXTENDED WRITING TOPIC:

People have many kinds of relationships, such as those with bosses, friends, coaches, or relatives. **Write a paper in which you examine a relationship that has made a difference to someone.**

You might, for example, do **one** of the following:

discuss the benefits and/or costs of maintaining a relationship

**OR**

describe a relationship that has become stronger despite problems

**OR**

explain a special relationship you have with someone older or younger than you

**OR**

consider a time when you were changed by a relationship with someone  
different from you

**OR**

explore a relationship in which you learned something important from someone you admire

**OR**

take any of several other approaches to discussing this idea.

Your audience will be interested adult readers who may not have read your writing from Session 1.

## 2a Student Response 1

The cost of a relationship is to trust the person. To be wise to them. And if you have a problem with them tell them. The benefits of a relationship is you will have a loyal friend. All friendships are based on trust. It say I lent my best friend fifty dollars. I know my friend would pay me back if he was a loyal friend.

I have a friend that is older than me. I lift weights with him when I can. He is all most like ~~me~~ a older brother to me. I try to follow in his foot steps but it is very hard too. The reason is we have the same interest. But we have different back grounds. And we have different weakness. I have problems with reading, spelling, and proper grammar. We have the same interest like Football, wrestling, and track.

I have a young girlfriend than me. We have a a great relationship with one - another. We careal each other.

**Score Point: 1**

This high 1 response attempts to respond to two different parts of the prompt: costs/benefits and older/younger relationships. This shift in focus results in little discernible shape with few details to support the ideas given.



## 2b Student Response 2

I personally know of one certian relation ship that has affected me personally. In this relationship there were two people who came from non-broken homes, which is rare for these times. He was raised by his mother and lived with her since the age of six, so he knew what it was like living with only one parent, but didn't have to go through the agony of divorce. She led the regular American life, mother, father, and one brother. So I don't think either one of them were raised with that negative environment that's why I think this relation ship worked so well. They had there share of problems, in fact they had more then there share of problems.

They fought about every thing, even the littelt things. But they were like no other couple I had ever see before. The thought of splitting up never came to mind. Because they loved each other so much, that no problem was to severe.

And to this day they are still together to this day. And I believe it had to do with their up bringing. If you ask me there needs to be more relationships like this one. we should all use them as an example

## Score Point: 1

This response attempts to discuss the relationship between two people from non-broken homes. However, the details (lived with only one parent; had more than their share of problems; fought about everything) do not support the idea that "this relationship worked so well." Clarifying the link between these ideas would help this high 1 response.

2c Student Response 3

My friend R has changed my  
Life quite dramatically  
I was the shy person  
who needed a friend a best  
friend so badly. And he  
came along. He helped  
me to let some fun  
come into my life  
We both had some difficulties  
in our relationship but  
that's what made  
us stronger. I changed  
his life by coping  
with his problems  
He changed my life  
by letting me make  
my own decisions  
R and I had made  
sure that our relationship  
would never die,  
like when we were wrong  
about something we told  
each other what we could  
do to make it up to each  
other.

Our friend ship has  
survived and will do  
so until we are  
separated

**Score Point: 2**

This low 2 response is focused on the relationship between R and the writer. The ideas (changed my life quite dramatically, difficulties in our relationship, and made sure our relationship would never die) are developed with limited details and examples. Sentence structure and diction are generally correct but rudimentary.

## 2d Student Response 4

Today I'm going to tell you about a relationship I had that I know for a fact changed someone's life. About 2 months before school had started I met a girl her name was B. ~~and she~~ B was the kind of girl that when she was around there was never a dull moment. But before I met her she had a boyfriend named K. K was the kind of kid that always skipped school and talked B into doing these sorts of things with him. But they broke up and I stepped in. After 2 weeks of knowing B I went out with her. This had lasted 3 weeks and she broke up with me. She said it was because we didn't know each other, which we really didn't. So we became friends for about 4 more months. Then she liked me again. I did to, so I didn't ask her out because I didn't think she liked me that well. But about 2 weeks ago she started liking me so, I seen an opportunity so I took it. Now I am really interested in one of her friends. But B doesn't want

me but she doesn't want anybody to have me either.  
I guess what I am trying to say, is that the  
person it took her so long to like me again is  
she had trust me because she didn't want to  
be treated like Kevin treated her. I know this  
made a difference because she told me that  
this was a learning experience because I treated  
her like God's gift, and she knows it, and now  
she won't settle for any thing else.

**Score Point: 2**

The writing in this response focuses on the relationship between the writer, a girl called B, and another boy called K. Some ideas are introduced (these sorts of things, I seen an opportunity so I took it, and treated like K treated her) but are not explained. The story shows some evidence of structure; however, the story moves too fast and lacks sufficient development for a higher score.

## 2e Student Response 5

Relationships, are they a good key to life.  
Can you live life without relationships. Yes, It may not be too fun, but you can still go through life. Take ~~bums~~ for example most of them just lie there all by themselves without a friend to talk to. However it is very tough living without a relationship. Almost every where you turn you have a relationship. It can be a close buddy, your parents, brother/sister, or any of your family. It can even be a staff person where you work or go to school with. Relationships become stronger because of problems.

It all started when I met this girl who worked with me. I found out that my boss was fighting a battle with her mom for custody. When I found this out I would go over to his house and talk to him and try to get his mind off of his battle. Then some other people who worked with us came over to his house also. He was happy that so many people cared for him. That incident helped all of us get to know our boss better. It also helped us get to know each other better.

A little later on, my boss visited his dad at the Hospital. Turns out his dad had cancer. I'm not sure where,

why, or where. When my boss was home we (The McDonalds crew) tried to comfort him as best as we could. He missed a lot of work that month visiting his dad. I was sad, my boss called the restaurant to let us know his dad died.

About a month later after S, my boss's dad died O, the girl I met at work was missing her real mother. It all started when O wanted to see her mom over Christmas break. She was supposed to be gone for only a week. After that week went by S went to go pick her up at the Airport and she wasn't there. When he came back everyone asked him where O was. He said he wasn't sure. So he called up her mom in Colorado about 20-30 times that day and never got an answer. He got very nervous, so again, we began to comfort him. He finally got a hold of O and asked her why she wasn't there yet. She said that she talked it over with her mom and thought it would be best if she stayed there. So S said what ever make you happy. My friends and I tried to talk her into coming back, but she refused. That when we all really got comfortable being with each other.

Another thing that S had to go through was dealing with the corporation. The corporation was giving him a lot of trouble about how the restaurant was being run.

### Score Point: 2

In this high 2 response, the writing is focused on the idea that relationships become stronger because of problems. The structure becomes only partially successful when the relationship between the writer and his boss is presented by citing examples of problems in the boss's life (daughter, father, custody, work). These examples are not successfully linked and the final paragraph is merely added on.

2f Student Response 6

The relationship between a coach and team mate is at times confusing, yet, at other times very special. The coach doesn't care if you hate him or not. He cares for you as if you were one of his children. He pushes you to do your best and if you're not doing it for yourself do it for him. Just give it 110%, that's all that matters. If you come in first place or in last place he still treats you the same - one of his.

"It's not a coach's job to get you to love him. You may respect him, trust him, want to please him, but deep down you hate him for pushing you to run one more mile, do one more sit-up, tackle one more player - not because you can't, but because you can and you do, even when you're convinced you can't," says Vince Lombardi. In the future you'll thank the coach for giving that



extra push because you'll realize that extra push got you to where you are today. Maybe in the olympics or a pro-football player, what ever it may be don't forget that coach helped you get there. If it wasn't for his extra push.

The coach's job is to get you to go out there, do your job as a team mate, and to listen to him. Some people may hate him for this, others may respect him for this. But understand he's doing his job. Coach cares for you as one of his own, he pushes you to do your best for you, if not for you; for him. He isn't getting paid for caring for you but he goes his limit and does it anyways, because he cares.

Maybe in the future you didn't become that pro-football player or olympic gold medalist but you have become an

office worker on something you would have never expected but thanks to the coach that extra push followed you to where you are today. So if you give 100% and do what the coach tells you to do i'm sure you have one of these special coach-teammate relationships. That extra push deserves a thank-you or a pat on the back just to let coach know you do appreciate everything he does for you. Coach and team mate relationships like this one don't happen often but if you have it, hold on to it. It's a special relationship, one you'll never forget, one you'll remember always, and definitely one that will make a difference in your lives, both.

**Score Point: 2**

This high 2 response focuses on the relationship between a coach and members of the team. The details supporting the idea that the coach cares for his team members as if they were his own children are repetitive. This repetition (hate the coach, do your best, extra push) causes the organization to be only partially successful.

2g Student Response 7

There are many things people can gain from a relationship. You can gain friendship, a companion, or just someone to talk to. On the other hand there are always going to be some cost.

The benefits of maintaining a relationship can be a good thing. Maintaining a steady relationship can give you something to be proud about. A special relationship can also let you know there is someone who cares about you in a certain way. This can include your parent's, girl or boyfriend, or just that special best friend. Knowing that there is someone out there makes you a better person. The person in your relationship can also <sup>help</sup> make important decisions, or help face tragic times in your life. This can always be related back to the famous quote, "Two heads are better than one, even if one is a cabbage head." So I believe a relationship can be very beneficial.

There are some cost that are included with maintaining a relationship. Not just money cost, but something that may be more important. These can include, loss of another friend, or even as severe as losing a parent. By this I mean, the every day example of a girl liking, or having a boyfriend, who the girl's parents despise. In most cases the girl always goes for the guy and loses touch with her parents.

Sometimes the girl or the parent gives in and thing make out ok. By any means this can emotionally hurt you and your parent or parents. Another example would be the loss of a friend. This can happen at school, where you and your best friend like the same guy. Well when he chooses one over the other, the two friends fall apart. Sometimes the friends can make it through, but sometimes they don't. Another everyday teenage problem, where a teen can lose her parents, boy friend, and everyday friends, is teen pregnancy. This can be very dramatic. But sometimes friends stick together, don't matter what kind of relationship or problem.

My examples come to show that maintaining a relationship can be very beneficial, or alot of times very costly. Even though there are some cost, don't be afraid of relationships.

**Score Point: 3**

The writing in this low 3 response is generally clear and focused on the benefits and costs of maintaining a relationship. Its organizational structure is functional and helps to control the writing. The list of benefits, along with well-developed examples of the costs (losing parents and friends), help to support the content.

## 2h Student Response 8

Relationships with someone different than you can change the way you live your life. I am an excellent example of this. The relationship I have with my girlfriend has caused me to change the way I am.

I was a totally different person before I started a relationship with my current girlfriend. I would constantly lie to my parents about where I was going. Then I would go out with my friends and abuse tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs. At first I only did these things on the weekends, but I ended up doing them everyday. My parents never caught me because even though I was trashed everyday I could still act normal and keep up my grades.

On the first day of school this year I saw a girl that I thought was so beautiful. She was perfect and I was determined to get her to go out with me. Then I started talking to her and getting to know her better. One of my friends told me that she was starting to like me, but she wanted to get to know me better. Then I asked her to go

to the movies and she said that she would. We had a good time and I was starting to like her more and more everyday.

Things were going good between us until she found out about all the bad things that I was doing. She told me that she wanted me to quit and she would help me through it. I agreed to quit because she meant so much to me, but I knew it would be very hard to do.

The first week that I was clean was the worst. Everything seemed so boring and the days seemed so long. If my girlfriend wasn't so supportive of me I don't think I could have ever quit. She showed me that life is better when you don't abuse drugs.

The way I live my life has changed greatly over the past year and I owe it all to my relationship with my girlfriend. If it wasn't for her I wouldn't have realized how dumb I was and I would have ended up getting into serious trouble. The relationship I have with my girlfriend has straightened out my life and given me a future.

**Score Point: 3**

This response presents a time when the writer was changed by a relationship with someone different from himself. The story begins with the background of the writer and quickly progresses from meeting the girlfriend to the changes (giving up drugs and alcohol) that come about. Although the details are clear and focused, they lack sufficient development to support the conclusion "my girlfriend has straightened out my life and given me a future."

## 2i Student Response 9

Relationships are a vital part of the human experience. Relationships help us learn from our mistakes, (such as mistakes made in past relationships). The interaction in relationships helps us achieve many more goals than what we could accomplish ourselves. This interaction is pivotal when working on a team to reach a common goal. Relationships are the foundation foundation for success.

Team work is directly dependent upon the degree of relation there is among colleagues. Relationships play a gigantic role in whether or not the team succeeds. The people involved in the team must all be focused on the common goal and make sacrifices to reach it. One example of this is my baseball team. Last year we were ranked seventh in the state and won a conference title. None of this would have been possible without teamwork. Everyone on the team had an excellent relationship with each other. This made possible the incredible success

we encountered.

Relationships help us learn from our mistakes. This is seen when a relationship you are in goes bad because of something you said or did. You can then learn from what you did and handle the situation differently the next time it appears. Relationships also improve our problem solving skills; by helping us better understand one another. A personal example would be my relationship with my last girlfriend. We dated for approximately nine months when I started to lose interest. I said a few negative comments about her and the relationship basically ended there. This relationship helped me to see that the world doesn't revolve around myself. On a concluding note, relationships help us better prepare for the real world.

Relationships help us increase the probability of reaching our goals. For example, my relationship with my baseball coach, Tim J. Coach J is a great



motivator, which in turn pushed me to succeed. I have achieved more with him than I know I could have ever possibly achieved without him.

Also, the hard-working qualities he has instilled in me have allowed me to make great strides in athletics as well as life. With this I have achieved my goal of receiving an athletic scholarship. In conclusion, relationships have helped me to reach my potential in life.

Relationships are the foundation for success. Without relationships we would live in an uneventful, bland society where no one strives for success. Our lives depend upon relationships. Without them we will never find a cure for AIDS, Cancer, or send a rocket to the center of the Earth. All great accomplishments and discoveries root back to the simple act of relating with each other. The next time you have an opportunity to enter into a relationship, do it! For you will accomplish much more with another person than by yourself.

**Score Point: 3**

The functional structure of this response helps to organize the four ideas: relationships help us learn from our mistakes, achieve goals, are pivotal in team work, and are the foundation for success. The examples supporting these ideas are general and do not clearly explain the writer's ideas (all great accomplishments and discoveries root back to the simple act of relating with each other).

2j Student Response 10

The first time I met B P was when I auditioned for her production of *The Diary of Anne Frank*. She was a plump African-American woman with an air about her that reeked of confidence and put the self-conscious in awe. As I sat in the audition room, watching all of the other girls try out I began to feel increasingly insecure. What chance did I have of getting a part? I'd never even been on stage before. As my name was called, I stood on what seemed to be legs made of jello and walked up to her. I felt a quaking fear that I might regurgitate my lunch upon her canary yellow sweater. Somehow, by the mercy of who knows, I didn't humiliate myself to such a horrible degree and I survived the audition. I knew that I didn't do very well and I knew I should have left but I didn't. I wanted to see the rest of the people audition. When it was all over and everyone was leaving I looked up at B's face. There was an enormous smile plastered there and it was directed right at me. The next day at school her mischievous smile was on my mind the entire day. When I walked in the door at home, it was still an enigma to me. Then, within a matter of minutes, the telephone rang. It was B offering me the lead role of Anne. I was so shocked, I just stood there for what seemed like an eternity and gaped. Finally, I managed to pick my chin up off the floor and accept the part.

Throughout the entire production she was very supportive of me and really made me feel like I belonged. I never really overcame my

self-consciousness regarding my being the only rookie on that stage but she made it much easier for me. Over the ~~next~~ months it took to get the show under way, she and I became very good friends. We were probably closer than anybody in the cast because of all of the extra time we spent together away from the stage. As we became even closer, I began to trust her increasingly more and finally, I felt confident enough to tell her about my dream. All of my life, I've fantasized about what it would be like to act professionally. I've dreamed about secretly and have always wanted to tell someone but I never had, until that night.

She seemed taken aback when I asked her if she thought I could do it. Then she asked me just one thing.

"What's stopping you?"

My answer was delayed but true. Fear. I was afraid I couldn't make it. I was afraid of rejection. I could handle the rejection and even overcome it. However, I still wouldn't want it.

She told me that she thought I had a gift and that I should utilise it. But I would have to be ready for the poverty, hunger and the deprivation. Was I really ready and willing to abandon the luxuries I now enjoyed?

As I try to determine what my future might hold, I will always remember what B said and what a great friend to me she was. She was a great support to me and I will always have a special place in my heart for her. My friend.

**Score Point: 4**

The writing in this response is original, clear and focused. The control used in developing the relationship between the writer and B moves the reader easily through the story. The voice and tone are authentic, and the control of language (reeked of confidence and put the self-conscious in awe; quaking fear) contributes to the effect of the presentation.

## 2k Student Response 11

My older sister, S, and I share a special kind of relationship. She is my half-sister and is nine years older than me. With that age gap we are still surprisingly very close. When I was younger, everything I did from the way I dressed or did my hair to the activities I would be involved in was a reflection of what S would do.

Everyone in our family seemed to always say how much S and I looked alike. I was and am still flattered by that idea because my sister is and always has been very beautiful. If S would go and get her hair cut short, I'd go and cut my hair the same way. It was like monkey see, monkey do. Pretty soon people would start to switch our names around.

During her high school years, we didn't do many things together. She lived with her mother, while I lived with my mom and our dad. She played basketball, golf and softball and did very well in all three activities. I started to play softball and basketball at a very young age. I practiced basketball all of the time so I could be as good as her, but it was hard because I really didn't like it as much as she did.

S drove around a little, red Fiero that I absolutely adored. I told her to save it for me so when I could drive that's the car I would drive. So my

parents put it away for me to drive when S got a new car.

During the summer S worked a very demanding job on our family farm. It was during cherry season and she had a lot of responsibilities to take care of. When I wasn't big enough to ~~even~~ drive a forklift, I'd always go over to the farm to see if I could help her.

After Sarah graduated from high school, she went on to College. I was in about 4<sup>th</sup> grade at the time. Before she left I helped her pack up her room and ~~and~~ set up her things at her dorm. I thought college was so cool, I used to tell people that that would be the college I would go to.

Her first year at college, I got to go stay with her for a weekend or two. She played basketball there so I got to hang out with all of the players. I thought she was the coolest person ever. A couple of years went on and we started to write each other.

Letters went back and forth, I got to see her and stay with her more often. Before I went into junior high I wrote S a letter telling her how worried I was, that I wouldn't be able to fill her footsteps that she left behind for me to fill. I told her I didn't think I'd be able to do it.

The letter back to me was one that I will never forget. It said something like this, J, you are your own self, make sure you do the things you want to do, not just because I did them. You are a very special person with your own qualities and

personalities, don't follow in my footsteps, make your own. Being only in seventh grade, I really didn't pay much attention as to what it had to say, so I just put it away with all the other letters. Every once and a while I would pull them out and reread them. It wasn't until the end of my freshman year that I decided to take that little piece of advice. I looked at myself and realized, everything I did and was doing was what S did. I was S at a glance and I up close. My hair was just like hers, I played basketball because she did and I took some of the same classes she would have taken. I even did the same job as she did in the summer. A couple of times people that knew S would come up and start talking to me, not knowing I wasn't S until I told them.

I decided to start becoming myself. I wanted to be known as Jessica, not S's little sister. I grew out my hair, like I wanted, quit trying to be as good as her in basketball and started to do things that I wanted to do. I've broadened my horizons beyond just what S did.

I think and feel that this was one of the best things I did for myself. We still do a lot of things alike, I still get called S every once in a while, but now I am my own self. I took S's letter, don't follow in my footsteps, make your own, to get me to be an individual. Right now I feel we are closer than ever. We compare our high school stories that seem to be alike in some respects. I look up to her more than ever, but I make sure to be myself.

**Score Point: 4**

The changing relationship of J and S is richly developed and supported by effective examples and details. The maturing relationship is presented clearly and progresses logically as J grows up and becomes her own person. The thoughtful tones and ideas (I was S at a glance and I up close; I've broadened my horizons beyond just what S did) help this 4 response to be engaging, original, clear and focused.

21 Student Response 12

[Three]

③ days a week I make a journey. I make a journey outside myself; outside my mind. ~~③~~ I go to a place where things are confused and people can't understand why. I journey to the Evangelical Home to visit G

G is not my grandma. She is not my great-aunt. She isn't related to me at all. G is a client of my father's who is dying slowly. ~~③~~ My Dad used to pay me to visit her, so she would have some sort of link to the outside world. I hated it. The room smelled like medicine and I only went because my Dad wanted me to.

I would come, obediently, up to her room. I would sit patiently and chat with her about school. I would wish I were at home. And then, things changed. I began to see things from her point of view. Gertrude has no children ~~and~~<sup>or</sup> husband. She has nobody. I decided that I would become somebody for her.

So I journey, three days a week. G always sits in her wheelchair facing the wall. This makes me angry. Can't they at least face her to the window? G is wearing old clothes. The clothes are from another era, no doubt. The faded brown and red flowers on the polyester shirt tell me they're from around 1970. G doesn't care what she wears, and probably doesn't even pick what she wears.

Next to G on the Countertop are flowers. The flowers are from herself, to herself, via my Father. G continually looks at the wilting flowers and worries about watering them. It makes me laugh.

G ~~so~~ doesn't remember me all the time. Sometimes, IF I come in after a long break, it's almost as if we're meeting again for the first time. She doesn't know my name, and couldn't remember it if she tried. The only reason I keep coming back to her and reintroducing myself is because every time I do, I see her dull gray eyes come alive. I am all this woman has. I can't walk out on that. It doesn't even matter that I may tell her my name twice, or even three times a day. ~~It~~ It is completely irrelevant ~~and~~ to our relationship.

I know she will die soon. She's 91, and she was born in 1908. That's a lot of history she's been through. I don't doubt that I would remember much, either. I ask her a lot about things I learn in Class, like the Great Depression and Martin Luther King. She doesn't remember any of it. She is a little embarrassed by not remembering, so I try not to ask her questions.

When I arrive at her door, G is



face<sup>Engl</sup> her flowers. The flowers are fresh each month, so most of the month they are wilted. G has her flowers, and she has me. The Flowers wilt and die, month by month, and G fusses about watering them. The flowers wilt, and G wilts with them. In a way, I think I am the water the flowers need to stay alive.

Score Point: 4

2m Student Response 13

Sometimes the people you most deeply trust in life can betray you...

- Yesterday was my birthday, finally 8! Life was great. Playing every day after school, not worrying about homework, girls, or adult conflicts. I'd never want to grow old and not be able to play.

I bridged through the mud in my bright blue rubber boots; headed for M's house. The sun peeked through the clouds, occasionally sending an individual ray of light past them. Fresh buds occupied the seemingly infinite number of trees that surrounded the path; the path that linked my house to M's.

M was my best friend, we did everything together. Every day, after school, I would take this path, wondering what fun game, sport, or trick we would come up with next.

I arrived at M's right as the sun busted through the peering clouds-- maybe it was a sign of a glorious day approaching! As always, the back door was wide open, giving me home a sense of warmth and welcome.

"Hello! Hello! Anyone home?" I chirped in a high, enthusiastic voice.

"Hey D! What should we do today? Wrestling

soccer, puzzles, T.V., football, you name it, we got it!" M was a real character. Humor and suspense were his two strong points. I've even seen him scare old misses Washington, but that's another story withing itself!

"Let's go to the store today. I don't have very much time, but I have lots of money from my birthday! My mom says now that I'm eight I can go to the store with you whenever I want!" I felt like I was a kid who had just been given 500,000 knicks and had enough power to do whatever he wanted.

"I don't have any money, but I guess I'll come if you promise to buy me a hotdog!" M was a little on the chunky side.

"No prob. M M, let's just get going. I've got a birthday party this afternoon at grandpa's house!"

We went to the store and I loaded up with candy to add to my enormous collection.

After "retrndgng" down the path I edged out of my muddy clothes and found my mom sitting on my play chest in the toy room.

"D, I went through your presents this mornng from friends and you're missing twenty dollars." My mother looked disappointed, like she

was accusing me of taking extra money to the store without permission.

"Mommie! I didn't take the money! I only took the five dollars that you told me to!" A small tear rolled down my muddy cheek. Even though I was eight, it was still okay to cry... as long as no one found out.

"D, the only person ever after the party was M, do you want me to call his mother and see if she can find it?" This made me furious. My mother couldn't even trust my best friend. But I guess that if I trust him there's nothing to worry about.

"Okay mommie... but please ask nicely and DON'T let her tell M!" For some reason tears began to pour from my red puffy eyes.

My mother made the call. The suspense was killing me. I sat next to the phone, waiting for her to call and say that she hadn't found it. The clock ticked off every second, my brain was filled with all sorts of crazy thoughts. M was my best friend. If he had stolen my money, how could I ever trust him again?

The loud, annoying ring of the telephone interrupted my train of thought. Sweat formed and dripped from my forehead.

"Hi-hello." I whispered nervously.

"D, this is M. I'm. I've got your money."

Even though this little incident happened a very long time ago, I still remember the lesson it taught me. Actually, I forgave M, hoping that he would realize his flaws, but he did the same thing again, in ~~flidly~~ even more pain. There are some people in this worthy race that would admit it, that just can't be trusted. Sometimes it's your best friend, sometimes it can even be your family. I think this incident taught me that friends can only be so close and that disappointment plays a major role in life. In my present life I have many wonderful relationships filled with trust and respect, but I'll never leave my wallet lying around in my room again... never.

Score Point: 4

## 2n Student Response 14

Here's something that should dull your mind: Life is hard. Well, duh! Of course it's tough. The stresses of modern life impose themselves on your every senses, until you are submerged in a sea of doubt and worry. Now, if this sounds like an auspicious start to a paper, all of you who are preparing to knock me off my soapbox, can relax. I plan on simply subscribing a relief from all the worry in your life. Join a Hockey team. No lie. Join a hockey team and see how you interact with your teammates. Watch as the secretiveness of seeing a person take off their pickstrap, while you don't know him/her. Watch as this secretiveness grows into openness as your teammates become extensions of you and you extensions of them. But above all else, watch as a team of strangers becomes just a team. A relationship. A home.

Your first step to relief from life's quibbles comes when you assume a place in the team psyche. This will help to determine your rate at which you will be accepted. Now, before I go on, let me make this clear to all of you: your right now sitting there thinking that trying to be accepted into anything is damaging and normally you would be correct. But this is a special case, for you see, I'm not talking about being accepted in any normal way. In time, all of you will be brought into the group. They will become your closest friends and confidants, just give it time. Ok so we have that out of the way, let's go back to your place on the team. What position do you want to play? Forward? defense man?

Goalie? Well, the forwards are the flashy types and tend to be leaders that need to do all that scoring to keep up with some unknown ideal Defensemen. are quiet, somber types that have incredible low self-esteem and a lofty work ethic. Goalies are different. They're off beat and tend to be mercurial by nature. They live on the highs and lows of life but never the middle. Choose wisely.

All right, you've practiced together for a while, now what? Angry that no corrections have been made? Don't be. The corrections are there, though you can't see them. They're there all right, because I can see them as you line up for shooting practice and you let J get a little closer to the goalie because he has a bad wrist and it's hard for him to shoot properly. The team gets into a yelling match in the locker room over coach ordering you to do more wind sprints. You yelling, I yelling, everyone's yelling, but none of you are yelling at each other. In unison, that's the way your thinking. (Your) teammates thoughts are yours and vice versa. There's the game tomorrow night.

Are you ready or aren't you? As you step into the locker room, I can see it all. Everyone yells the guys make that just came in (save the goalies), who asked to not be spoken to before the match. We'll skip the game itself. Whether you guys self-destructed or went on to greater glory doesn't matter. What matters is you felt it. You felt the

excitement of the game course through your veins. You could alternately love and hate your wingers as they receive your pass for a breakaway and then choke at the last minute. But after the game, you sit there, grinning smiles on your faces because you won or lost that game as a team.

Let's say we fast forward a bit into your season. Your spouse is continually yelling at you for going down to Scotty's pub with your wingers and I (the defenseman, who you proudly say to nearly everyone you meet, played for an NHL farm club team) at all hours. She's right you know. So after Friday's game, everyone comes over to your house for a bar-b-que. Even Coach shows up. The rest of your team comes early bringing their favorite dishes. Look, I brought that vegetable casserole that he eats before every game. All of you pronounce it god-awful and even I starts to laugh as everyone howl hysterically at him. I know you can feel it now.

And that's the joys of being on a team. It won't matter how you did at the end of the season (you ended up 5-15). All that matters is that you've made golf reservations with I and one of the goalies. All that matters is that while you played hockey, your accounting firm voted you a three month stint as "Accountant-of-the-Month." All that matters is that the entire team made a pact to come back next year and play, but provided you all



were all the same team.

Now that I've given you all this great, forethought and advice, what are you going to do? What, you don't like hockey? I suppose you haven't been following along then. It doesn't matter what kind of team it is (though I prefer hockey). The same could be done in Football, Baseball, or in any classroom. For that matter, the point is that the feeling of belonging, the feeling of togetherness can't overcome every obstacle in your life. But it is a fallback for when you fail. That's what makes coy TV shows or movies seem good: it draws us in and lets us feel like we're on a friendly level with the characters. But a team provides that better because not only do you not get that unbecoming glassy-eye look that becomes part of TV junkies, but you're dealing with real people. Through hockey I have learned the world can be a place of joy and wonderment even in "enlightened" age. So should you.

Score Point: 4

District: MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
 School: PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
 Codes: District- 99999  
 Run Date: 09/19/2000

**Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP)  
 High School Test: Writing  
 Frequency Distribution Report  
 Grade 11 1st Time Testers  
 Spring 2000**

Scaled Score	Raw Score	Freq.	Scaled Score	Raw Score	Freq.	Scaled Score	Raw Score	Freq.	Scaled Score	Raw Score	Freq.
Level 4 ↓	442	0.0	128	Level 3 ↓	500	6.0	7,089	Level 2 ↓	534	8.0	10,516
	448	0.5	0		508	6.5	3,343		546	8.5	7,696
	454	1.0	292		516	7.0	7,518		563	9.0	13,502
	457	1.5	130		525	7.5	4,371		578	9.5	4,208
	460	2.0	488						591	10.0	4,068
	463	2.5	121								
	465	3.0	574								
	468	3.5	156								
	471	4.0	1,771								
	476	4.5	195								
	482	5.0	3,136								
	490	5.5	1,943								

Number included in summary: 75,439

A score of 605 through 649 is considered Level 1, Endorsed - Exceeded Michigan Standards.

A score of 534 through 591 is considered Level 2, Endorsed - Met Michigan Standards.

A score of 500 through 525 is considered Level 3, Endorsed - At Basic Level.

A score of 442 through 490 is considered Level 4, Not Endorsed.

### Frequency Distribution of Comments

#### Session 1

##### Frequency

##### Comment

11,983	1:	This response represents only an attempt to reflect or limited reflection on one's own writing; the response may retell or summarize the content of the portfolio pieces, rather than reflect upon the writing.
26,321	2:	This response presents broad or vague generalizations about writing with few, if any, relevant details and examples from the portfolio pieces.
1,146	3:	This response lacks clarity, focus, coherent organization or direction, which may cause confusion for the reader.
186	4:	This response demonstrates limited control over surface features and conventions, making the paper difficult to read.
22,907	5:	This response represents a competent response, but would need more reflection to get a higher score.
16,282	6:	This response represents a competent response, but would need more relevant examples or details from the portfolio pieces to get a higher score.
2,556	7:	This response earned the highest scorepoint of 4.
5,591	8:	This response represents a highly competent response.

#### Session 2

##### Frequency

##### Comment

2,089	1:	This response lacks clarity and focus on the main idea.
20,636	2:	This response needs relevant details and examples to more fully develop the ideas and content.
5,965	3:	This response lacks coherent organization or direction, which may cause confusion for the reader.
8	4:	This response demonstrates inappropriate or uneven voice and/or tone.
4,255	5:	This response demonstrates limited control over sentence structure, vocabulary and/or conventions, making the paper difficult to read.
25,083	6:	This response represents a competent response, but would need richer development of the main idea with some relevant details and examples or more control of organization to get a higher score.
26,132	7:	This response represents a competent response, but would need more control of the conventions, variation of the language or stronger voice to get a higher score.
2,929	8:	This response earned the highest scorepoint of 4.
6,415	9:	This response represents a highly competent response.